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ABSTRACT

Offering the student a way to develop a clear, concise style of writing, this nine-week journalism unit acquaints the student with various aspects of newspaper writing and publishing and with the correct methods for gathering and writing school news. The first part of the course introduces the students to the history and ethics of journalism and to the parts of a newspaper, to various kinds of news stories, and to technical journalism terms. From there, a temporary staff can be organized and decisions on the type of printing, circulation procedures, and deadlines can be made; each student would be involved with some aspect of the paper. The following weeks would be spent in producing the finished copy and sending it to the printer. The last week would be devoted to the students' evaluation of their writing style and effectiveness, and analysis of the makeup and general appearnace of the paper, oral reports on newspaper sales, suggestions for the next issue, and an objective test on newspaper terms. (Suggested course materials and a bibliography are included.) (HS)

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ED 071085

ENGLISH MINI - COURSE

JOURNALISM

(Preliminary, Unedited Version)

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Louis J. Kishkunas, Superintendent

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

September, 1971

CS 200 295

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to write well is of great importance, both in school and out. Almost every profession demands some writing. Work on a school newspaper is one of the best ways to develop a clear, concise style of writing that can be put to use in almost any occupation.

It is the purpose of this course to enable high school students to prepare and publish a school newspaper. The course is designed to acquaint the student with various aspects of newspaper writing and publishing and with the correct methods for gathering and writing school news. No attempt is made to outline a vocational course or to train high school students to become professional newsmen. The course, however, should enable the student to test his aptitude and liking for the journalism profession.

Because of the limitations imposed by a nine-week unit, it will be necessary for the student to decide early in the course in which area he would most like to work; however, each staff member should have an overall knowledge of the entire newspaper. It is advisable to set up at least a temporary staff after the first week of class, but such an organization should be open-ended, allowing students to move into other positions if they demonstrate greater ability or interest. Basic knowledge of newspaper terms, style, and makeup will be required. All students should be able to identify news, to develop ability in securing information, and to evaluate its worth to the paper. All staff members should be expected to critically study local newspapers and other periodicals, both in class and in homework assignments. The advisor as well as the class must be constantly aware of the deadline for publication, and all work must be geared to the publication date.

OBJECTIVES

The student should be able:

- To prepare and publish a high school newspaper.
- To demonstrate improving habits of clear, concise, and accurate writing.
- To display a critical attitude toward news and to evaluate the worth of a news story.
- To define newspaper terms and technical aspects of newspaper writing.
- To demonstrate skill in collecting and organizing materials from all sources.
- To identify the divisions of the newspaper staff and to describe the functions of each.
- To list the standards and goals of the paper.
- To explain the makeup of a newspaper and the various types of printing available to newspapers.
- To describe newspaper history and ethics and to evaluate their relationship to today's press.
- To compare and evaluate current publications including the underground press and periodicals.
- To evaluate his own capacity and aptitude for the journalism profession.

OVERVIEW

Newspaper history and ethics	First Week
Underground newspapers	
Importance of newspapers to the community and school	
Parts of the newspaper	
Types of news stories	
Common technical terms	
Organization of staff	Second Week
What is news?	
Where to find news	
How to write news	
Future book	
Style sheet	
How to write a good lead	
Pyramid structure	
Completion of staff organization	Third Week
Assignment sheet	
Assignment of reporters to beats	
Rules for writing headlines	
Editorial writing	
Features, columns, and special stories	
Illustrating the newspaper	
Writing of articles (Editors should check off completed assignments; all copy must be approved by the advisor.)	Fourth Week
All feature articles and copy not dependent upon upcoming events should be in the hands of the page editors.	Fifth Week
All cuts and art work in exact size should be submitted for page dummy.	
Page editors or reporters should be instructed in writing cutlines.	
Faculty advisor should assign all rewrites.	
Reporters should be encouraged to remain on their beats, especially for spot news items, which can be combined in a single column; e.g., "News In Brief," "News Briefs," etc.	

Sixth Week

By the end of this week copy should be ready for the printers.
If a letter press is used, copy will be returned for corrections. For offset printing, page proofs are sent.
Lead story, banner, and all headlines, cuts, and material should be in by Friday. The deadline will depend on the type of printing.

Seventh Week

Checking proofs
Last minute corrections
Plans for distribution
Feature stories and editorials for the next edition

Eighth Week

Receipt of paper
Distribution
Updating of future book for the next issue
Continuation of feature writing and editorials for the next issue
Photographs and art work for the next issue

Ninth Week

Evaluation

Staff: Effectiveness of stories
Appearance
Readability
Number of sales

Advisor: Number, type, and merit of copy and headlines written by each student
Cooperation in meeting deadlines, following through on assignments
Knowledge of newspaper terms and operations

COURSE MATERIALS

Local newspapers

Ditto sheets on specific topics

Basic Text:

Hartman, William. *Journalism.* River Forest, Illinois; Laidlaw Brothers, 1968.
(Referred to hereafter as Text - one copy per pupil)

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Because of the nine-week time limit, it is desirable to establish specific plans for each week of the course in order to meet publication deadlines. To some extent the final weeks of the course will be determined by the type of printing selected by the school, but it is recommended that teachers be generally guided by this weekly outline to insure production of newspaper by the conclusion of the course.

At the beginning of each week the teacher should review topics from the previous week and introduce the goals for the coming week. New topics should be introduced by using samples from local newspapers, the text, ditto sheets, or chalkboard listings. After introduction of the work, students should proceed on their own. As the students work in groups or individually, the teacher can act as a director working with groups and individuals alternately. This laboratory-type procedure not only gives the student individual help, but it also enables the teacher to assess the progress of each student. It is desirable for the atmosphere to approach as nearly as possible that of a news office. At times during each week, the instructor may call attention to a particular point which needs further explanation.

The following sections outline each week in the course.

A. First Week: The aim of the week's work is to give the student a background knowledge of the history and ethics of journalism, and to acquaint him with the parts of a newspaper, the kinds of news stories, and the most common technical journalism terms.

1. Assign text readings on the history and ethics of journalism. Discuss the materials with the class. Using the material in the bibliography as a basis, discuss with students the underground press, and the importance of the newspaper in schools and communities. Stress the importance of establishing standards and goals for the newspaper.

2. Discuss the various departments of the newspaper. Provide each student with copies of the same edition of a local paper to facilitate the explanation and discussion. Emphasize the importance of the business and mechanical departments, as well as advertising.

3. Using the same paper, ask students to analyze the types of stories (news, features, spot news, advance, follow-up, etc.) Ask students to consider the scope, quality, completeness, and entertainment appeal of each story.

4. Use the text glossary for listing newspaper terms. Emphasize the importance of learning to use the jargon. Give a quiz to evaluate comprehension and retention of the vocabulary.

5. Introduce the triangle or pyramid structure and explain procedures for preparation of copy. Ask each student to write a short news story based on a school event. Allot classroom time for oral reading and discussion of the stories.

B. Second Week: The aim of the first part of the week is to organize the staff, set standards and goals for the paper, decide on the type of printing and circulation procedures, and set the issue's deadline. The second half of the week should be spent on an in-depth study of the definition of news, sources of news, and news writing.

1. Discuss the duties of editors (page, sports, feature, etc.), circulation manager, reporters, copyreaders, and other important positions.

2. Staff organization will depend on the number of students, type of printing, and circulation procedures. The class should be organized to give the greatest number of students experience and yet keep the paper under centralized control. It is often successful to have four or five page editors rather than a single managing editor. Under this plan, the page editor is responsible for assigning, gathering, copyreading, and editing all news on the page. The page editor should record all assignments, keep a future book, and determine the makeup of the page.

3. Discuss the various types of printing which are available. It is advisable to investigate funds allotted for the paper.

4. Discuss journalism standards with the class. Using student suggestions, list the standards and goals for the paper.

5. Discuss the complete process of writing a news story. Introduce the style sheet, future book, and assignment sheet. Have students continue to practice writing news stories based on school events.

C. Third Week: The aim of this week is to have every member of the class working on some aspect of the paper. Each student should have a specific assignment, and all work must be geared to the deadline.

1. Assign all reporters to regular beats. Set up assignment sheets.

2. Assign all feature stories, using student suggestions for subject matter.

3. Encourage staff members to write editorials. Discuss choice of topics for editorials and methods of writing editorials.
Check the headline schedule with the printer. (The type of headlines will be determined by the method of printing.) Familiarize the class with the headline schedule and encourage students to practice writing headlines for their own stories.

4. Arrange for photographers if none are available in class. Contact art teachers for drawings, emphasizing that only simple line drawings may be easily reproduced.

D. Fourth Week: The week's work should produce as much finished copy as possible. Encourage the habit of one article a day per student.

1. Have students refer to the style sheet at the end of the text when writing copy.

2. Instruct students to submit their completed stories to the page editor to be checked off the assignment sheet and copyread. Remind students to use the pyramid structure to allow for cutting.

3. Have the page editors plan their page as the stories are submitted. Cuts should be dummied in and cutlines written. (The printer may want the cuts before the copy deadline.)

4. Instruct students to leave space open on the front page for spot news or last minute additions.

5. Assign one reporter to write or collect one- or two-line fillers in case of last minute space.

6. Check all copy and assign rewrites as needed.

7. Discuss the meaning of the saying, "Names sell papers."

E. Fifth Week: Be the end of the week, all material not dependent upon upcoming events should be turned in to the page editors. Feature stories and pictures also should be turned in by the end of the week.

1. Encourage reporters to continue beat coverage. Small items can be included in a special column, such as "News in Brief."

2. Cutlines, subheads, and headlines should be assigned to reporters and submitted to the page editors.

3. Instruct page editors to check assignment sheets for any incoming stories.

4. Check the banner and lead story.

F. Sixth Week: All work should be completed by the end of the week and copy sent to the printer. If a letter press is used, copy will be returned in galley proofs for corrections. If an offset press is used, page proofs will be sent.

G. Seventh Week: Time should be set aside for checking proofs, making last minute corrections, and writing feature stories or editorials for the next issue. Students not involved in these activities should read and report on books listed in the bibliography.

H. Eighth Week: Distribution of the paper will be the main activity of the week. The business manager should be in charge of organizing and planning, but a large number of staff members will be needed to insure accurate, prompt delivery. Those students not involved in distribution should continue the activities of the previous week.

I. Ninth Week: The final week should be devoted to evaluation activities.

1. Discuss each story in the paper, asking students to evaluate the writing style and effectiveness.

2. Have students analyze in discussion the makeup and general appearance of the paper.

3. Ask students to prepare a future book for the next issue.

4. Administer an objective test on newspaper terms.

5. Ask a few students to present an oral report on newspaper sales.

6. In a few paragraphs, have students describe suggestions for the next issue.

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